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OF MICHIGAN

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LIBRARY SCIENCE  
LIBRARY

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ASSISTANT  
LIBRARIAN

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# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

*(Section of the Library Association)*

Edited by A. C. Jones, Hornsey Public Libraries.

VOL. 48. NO. 7

JULY, 1955

## EDITORIAL

DEMAND FOR a Municipal Libraries Section gathers momentum. We understand that the other existing Sections—most of them of course representing special library interests—are already agreed in principle that the formation of such a Section would be desirable. (The argument that municipal library matters are at present discussed by the L.A. in full Council, whereas special library matters go first to the Section committee has often been quoted in its support). Only the A.A.L. holds back, and the matter will come again before the A.A.L. Council in September.

Our attitude to this question is neither selfish nor reactionary. It is clear that the establishment of a Municipal Libraries Section could present a very serious threat to the continued existence of the A.A.L., the majority of whose members are drawn from municipal libraries, and no assurances by the Library Association, however well intentioned, could possibly eliminate the danger. It might well be that the L.A., with the support of the other Sections, would be willing to guarantee the continued existence of the A.A.L. on terms similar to those obtaining at present. But the L.A. could not guarantee that the number of members continuing to "opt" for the A.A.L., and to take an active part in its meetings, would be sufficient to ensure that our services to the profession could continue on the same scale as heretofore. It has been suggested that should a Municipal Libraries Section be formed, the number of Sections which a member might join without additional charge might be increased to three. This could serve artificially to bolster up our declined status, but the challenge would remain.

We must consider very carefully whether we wish to continue as a mass movement for all assistant librarians, whatever their status and needs, and if so what we have to offer them once their examinations are over. Or whether we are prepared now to concentrate on our service to student librarians and accept the fact that competition from a new Section for municipal librarians must result in reduced membership, or at the least a reduced active membership.

A further consideration is always relevant whenever constitutional changes affecting the A.A.L. are discussed. The present arrangement of Branches and Sections, in which the A.A.L. appears to some as the ugly duckling, does at least enable an army of members to perform yeoman service to the cause of librarianship through the framework of the A.A.L. Whether they, or others, would find opportunity for similar service in another setting, where the vital A.A.L. atmosphere was lacking, can only be discovered by experience. The A.A.L. works; before giving our support to any fundamental changes we must be satisfied that whatever organization is to replace it will work no less well.

# THE GREENWOOD LIBRARY FOR LIBRARIANS

By A. L. SMYTH, *Manchester P.L.*

THE STORY of Thomas Greenwood<sup>1</sup> is that of the industrious apprentice from a modest home who made good. Greenwood attributed much of his success as a prosperous publisher of trade magazines to his use of public libraries, particularly the old Campfield Library, Manchester. He was a strong and influential advocate of public libraries, as his writings testify. *Public Libraries* became a standard textbook and went through four editions between 1886 and 1894, and his *Life of Edward Edwards* shows how deeply he appreciated the problems of librarianship. In 1897, he founded *Greenwood's Library Year Book* which he edited until 1900. Unlike many of the philanthropic promoters of public libraries, who were his contemporaries, he was far sighted enough to realize that bricks and mortar were not enough and that the ultimate success of the public library movement largely depended on improving the status and raising the educational standards of library staffs. In a paper read to the Library Association in 1901, he said:—

"A library school is greatly needed, which shall be the headquarters of the Library Association, the Library Assistants' Association and the Public Library movement. Such a building might be known as the Edward Edwards' Library School."<sup>2</sup>

A year later he gave to the Manchester Public Libraries, in memory of Edward Edwards, a collection of 459 books, most of which had belonged to Edwards, including volumes of letters, day-books and other manuscript items.

Greenwood decided that the best way in which he could help the then struggling profession of librarianship was by "bringing together a library of such books as may be of professional service to librarians." At considerable expense and with great enthusiasm he collected a library of 10,000 volumes covering the fields of library economy, bibliography, printing and book production. This he transferred to the Manchester Public Libraries in September, 1905, on condition that it was to be made available to librarians, library assistants and students of librarianship. To ensure that the library would be kept alive, he also left a bequest of £5,000.

With the proceeds from this endowment, supplemented by the financial help of the Manchester Libraries Committee, and together with gifts from libraries and individuals from all over the world, the Greenwood Library has grown until it now contains over 20,000 volumes, as well as many thousands of newspaper clippings, plans and pamphlets. More than fifty professional periodicals and some four hundred annual reports, library bulletins, etc., are currently received and filed for permanent preservation. Last year 5,589 books were lent for home reading<sup>3</sup> and many hundreds of volumes were consulted in the Reference Library. For the student who is not content to limit his acquaintance with professional literature to the hundred or so books required to pass examinations, the Greenwood Library is a rich field indeed.

Nearly every book published on library economy is to be found here, including such worthy items as Constantin's *Bibliothéconomie*, Garnett's *Library Series*, and Guppy's *Special lectures for library assistants*, not to mention the various editions of Brown's *Manual*. There are too, numerous files of library periodicals, some with half-forgotten titles like *L.A.*

*Monthly Notes or The Library Chronicle*. The old periodicals with their reports of professional battles lost and won, contain a surprising number of excellent articles which can be read with profit by all those in search of a philosophy of librarianship. Along with the series of reports which begin with "Conference of Librarians, London, 1877," are many pamphlets, leaflets, letters and newspaper clippings relating to the Library Association. One of these early clippings is an article from *The Globe*, 4th October, 1877, with the title "Reverence for Rubbish," which might have been written by one of our present day cynics;

"Though we are not young and hopeful enough to imagine that much good will result from the Conference of Librarians who are just now comparing notes on professional problems, and putting their heads together for the better construction of wooden shelves, we regard their meeting as a pleasant social incident . . ."

A critical record of the ways of librarians is provided by the very comprehensive collection of library forms and documents made by Stanley Jast. In case one finds these too depressing, there are the novels of library life, *Girls in Green* and *Marion-Martha*, a "whodunit" about a body in the book-stack suitably titled *Death on the Borough Council*, and a volume of quaint humour, *Library Jokes and Jottings*.

The Greenwood Library is particularly rich in its collection of catalogues. First are the great national catalogues such as those of the British Museum, the Library of Congress, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the *Deutscher Gesamtkatalog*. Slightly less extensive are the catalogues of the universities and the learned libraries, like those of the Bodleian, Trinity College and the John Rylands Library. There are the catalogues of what were the great private libraries, *The Britwell Handlist*, *The Ashley Library Catalogue* and the *Bibliotheca Lindesiana*; catalogues of special libraries, for example, those of the Royal Empire Society and the Royal Institute of British Architects; catalogues from Reykjavic to Cape Town, and from Brighton to Aberdeen. Especially useful are those catalogues which attempt to record the publications of particular countries such as *The English Catalogue*, *The U.S. Catalog*, *Bibliographie de la France*, *Bibliotheca Belgice*, *Libreria Italiana*, *Hinrich*, and so on. There are the many tools required to solve the identity of the anonymous or pseudonymous author, Halkett and Laing, Querard, Barbier, Melzi, and the *Deutsches Anonymen Lexicon*.

The library contains a great number of bibliographies of particular subjects, including some very good examples of topographical bibliographies, bibliographies and bio-bibliographies of individual authors, and bibliographies of special classes of authors. Here, too, are the publications of both the Bibliographical Society and the Index Society, as well as the works of the great bibliographers—Watt, De Bure, Brunet and Clement, the erudite monographs of Peignot, and the extensive writings of Dibden and Querard.

Books on every aspect of type, printing, binding, book illustrations, book production, and publishing abound. These include the folios of the *Gesellschaft für Typenkunde*, the set of "Penrose," and Allnutt's materials for his *History of English Provincial Printing*. Many examples of book illustration are represented, among them the works of Bartsch and Nagler and the publications of the Société Calcographique. Greenwood was particularly keen to provide bibliographical specimens, in order, no doubt, to encourage high standards of taste in our profession. There are copies of books from famous presses ranging from Aldus to The Golden Cockerel as well as some very beautiful examples of both European and Asiatic bindings. The extreme is, in fact, reached with "books" which

are merely blank leaves covered with an elaborate and expensive binding. These are by no means the only bibliographical curiosities, however. Others are midget volumes, chained books, fore-edge paintings, horn books, writings on bark and palm leaves, a revolving Sanskrit manuscript, books with elaborate grangerising, and also the more modern "crime dossier" complete with burnt match-stick and blood-stained railway ticket.

Of exceptional interest are the specimens of manuscripts beginning with a fragment of Coptic uncial papyrus, a volume of various Byzantine and medieval manuscripts taken from old bindings, a beautifully illuminated Book of Hours and a more modern example of illumination in Frances Martindale's copy of *The Lady of Shalott*. Perhaps somewhat neglected nowadays are the large folios of facsimiles of manuscripts which were so excellently printed about the turn of the century. Of these the *Maya Codex*, the *Grimani Missal* and *The Book of Kells* should be noted.

The Greenwood Library, now in its Jubilee Year, is undoubtedly one of the major institutions of our profession. A collection of books such as this gives perspective and repute to Librarianship and the material is here from which we can plan future progress.

- (1) Grace Carlton. *Spade work : the story of Thomas Greenwood*. 1949.
- (2) Typescript in collection of Greenwood's personal papers, Greenwood Library.
- (3) Details of how to borrow books from the Greenwood Library are given in *The Library Association Year Book*.

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# ENGLISH AND GERMAN LIBRARIES

A COMPARISON by W. REUTER

*Assistant Librarian, University Library, Bonn.*

A GERMAN studying conditions in British libraries will soon find opportunities for comparison with those of his own country. Though conditions differ in the two countries, he may yet make some cautious generalizations.

Let us first consider the university libraries. The stock of the reference department in the two reading rooms of the London University Library is arranged according to the Dewey Decimal Classification, which results in all books pertaining to the same matter being found at one place.

In the reading room of the Bonn University Library a different consideration has created a similar classification. All natural sciences and all studies of humanity are divided into 8 groups, each of which is again sub-divided into several sub-divisions, for instance, Medicine in group No. 7: 1. General works; 2. History of medicine; 3. Anatomy; 4. Histology; 5. Physiology; 6. Surgery, etc.

To a person conversant with the respective systems, both arrangements permit a quick locating of a book. But, whereas the Decimal Classification has been introduced in a number of British University Libraries, a student in Germany, whenever he changes from one university to the other, must familiarize himself with a new kind of classification since there exists no general agreement among the libraries.

As far as I know, the Dewey Classification is not used in any German university library. Tradition and want of knowledge of this system which, once understood, would easily facilitate access to the books, has hindered its introduction. The general application of this system would prove of great advantage to students.

The newly established students' library in Bonn allows open access to all students; all the books, however, are catalogued according to 26 divisions, and each group is arranged alphabetically by the author's name. No subject grouping has been attempted. Thus, in section No. 15, concerning History, you will find a book on the French Revolution beside the History of Spain or Churchill's *Memoirs* beside the *Letters* of Donoso Cortes.

It is easy for a student to find a book if he knows its author and its title. But if he requires a book on a particular subject he may have to check over the whole group from A to Z (often containing more than a hundred titles).

Now that Germany is rebuilding her destroyed libraries, another important factor must be considered—open access to all or a part of the book shelves in any library. The system applied in Cambridge, Leeds, and partially in London and other University Libraries, enables the student to refer to a certain book on the spot. When and in what way this idea will begin to take root in Germany, remains to be seen, because even in England no final clarification has been reached on this particular question. Should there be open access to all or only some of the books? What kind of building would be most suitable? (Is the construction of an annexe or of a new building in addition to the old one more satisfactory?).

The German librarian, for his part, will miss subject catalogues in British University Libraries. Decimal Classification on the shelves cannot compensate for them. The title and subject index of the *British National Bibliography* proves this. The British university librarian must either

search his shelves or consult bibliographies for a subject approach to his stock.

As to the question of shelving the books in stacks, as on open shelves, I found many differing solutions to this problem. Normally each library has its own regulations. In Germany, too, there has been no general agreement on this subject, but for a long time the shelving of books by *numerus currens* has been common. All books are arranged continuously one beside the other, separated according to their sizes ignoring the subject matter of their contents. As far as I know, the Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig first introduced this system.

During my three months' stay I soon became aware of the fact that England is the leading country in the field of public libraries. In Germany the Stadt und Volksbüchereien (not Stadtbibliothektheken) can be compared with the British Public Libraries—too little money is being invested in these institutions.

The various handbooks on British Public Libraries published by the Library Association provide good opportunities for statistical comparisons. Sometimes British librarians were incredulous when I mentioned that, with few exceptions, there is no official open access to the books in our country. The reader will find nothing but very simple catalogues. The readers themselves have no means of realizing the amount and variety of existing books because the treasure is not made visible to them. Of course they can turn over the pages of the books wanted before borrowing them, but before they can hold a certain book in their hand the library assistant has to go and take it out of the stack from wherever it stands.

The wonderful institutions of Children's Libraries with their own reading rooms as I found them repeatedly in England ought to be introduced in Germany, too. Some of these are even visiting the schools to acquaint the children with book reading.

In Germany the opening hours of libraries appear to be very limited compared with those in England. In Bonn, for instance, the following rules are applied, which do not differ significantly from those of other places: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 11 to 12 a.m. and 4 to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 11 to 12 a.m.; Tuesday closed. Whereas the Public Libraries in London are keeping their doors open for about 50 to 60 hours per week.

The British Public Libraries are often in possession of an excellent reference department. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, works on history of literature are available to every reader and besides special literature, provide great assistance to widen his general or professional knowledge.

It is to be hoped that within the next few years a change of existing German conditions in this field will take place in order to offer the public more and better opportunities for becoming acquainted with good books. I do not think that the duty hours of the Public Libraries in Germany are limited because of lack of visitors. To me it seems as if financial reasons make these restrictions necessary and more money would probably be essential. It would be worth while to compile a comparable summary of book provision and use in our two countries. (*L.A. Record*, June, 1953, p. 203).

I hope that these pages may be the cause for further study of the relations mentioned above. After a three months' study of librarianship in England may this be my contribution. I should like to express my thanks in particular to the Library Association which enabled me to undertake my studies, and to all other helpful people I met who were always ready to give any assistance in showing me my way.

## BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

*LIBRARY TRENDS*, v. 3, no. 3, January, 1955: *Library Associations in the United States and British Commonwealth*. (Illinois Univ. Press, \$2).

*Library Trends*, a quarterly publication of the University of Illinois School, concerns itself in each issue with one aspect of librarianship. The issue under review is edited by D. H. Clift, who writes the opening article on "Associations in the United States." He deals with the nine principal library associations, giving most detail about the largest and oldest of them—the American Library Association. For a British librarian, Mr. Clift's summary is of interest because it shows how similar our problems and reactions to them are:

"The evolution of policy is slow in a membership organization, and the machinery for arriving at a group decision is often cumbersome, complex and ponderous. Proposed activities, issues, and programs work their way through many units. . . There has never existed any complete agreement among the members on what should be the programs of the A.L.A. Certainly there has never been any unanimity of feeling on how well the Association conducts its affairs."

The A.L.A. has twenty-nine geographical chapters and fifteen subject divisions; the nine library associations mentioned have a total of 31,000 members.

Mr. Roy Stokes contributes the article on British Associations, giving most space to a brief history of the L.A. and its functions and following this with a useful summary of the associations of the Commonwealth.

In spite of the title of this issue of *Library Trends*, little mention is made of Commonwealth associations in the other articles. The next six contributions concern the special responsibility of library associations for publishing, the education of librarians, promoting legislation, adult education, intellectual freedom and international co-operation. Of these by far the most interesting is that of Mr. Louis Shores on "Qualifications of personnel: Training and certification." Mr. Shores contrasts the educational policy of the A.L.A. with that of the L.A., the one having placed the emphasis on the establishment of library schools and the other on the conducting of examinations and the certification of librarians.

If this sample of *Library Trends* is typical, then obviously it is a periodical which the earnest student cannot afford to miss; it is crammed with facts which can be nicely tabulated in notebooks and possibly introduced to dazzle the examiners at a later date. The reviewer who no longer has examinations to pass can only wish that contributors could be a little less dull and wordy—for example, the A.L.A.'s fight for "freedom to read" ought to have been as exciting to read about as it was important.

E. J. WILLSON.

OTTENVIK, G., MÖHLENBROCK, S., and ANDERSSON, I. *Libraries and archives in Sweden*. 1954. (Stockholm, The Swedish Institute, Kr. 10).

This efficient, comprehensive and attractively produced little book is characteristic of the library service to which it is a guide. Within the compass of 217 pages is a survey of the university and public libraries of the country and its archive collections, with an historical introduction and chapters on legal deposit, training for library service, school libraries and other special services, library co-operation and the organization of the profession; and inevitably, in such a well-mannered publication, a list of Swedish national bibliographies and an adequate index. The more important libraries are dealt with individually, rather in the manner of Harrod's *Libraries of Greater London*, with short descriptions and figures for stock, staff and issues; photographs of buildings, activities and important books are provided on a generous scale.

Parallels with library service in this country are of course many. Increasing emphasis is being laid on library co-operation ("Co-operation must aim at placing the book resources of the whole country at the disposal of every citizen"); the Stockholm Libraries Co-operation Committee parallels our own Metropolitan Chief Librarians Joint Standing Committee, and future plans for university and research libraries include a scheme for more intense subject specialization and

co-operative book purchasing. Our own difficulties in the acquisition of foreign language material (and information about it) become insignificant in the light of Sweden's very great dependence on such works, especially in the technical field. English is a second language to most Swedes, and necessarily so for the student, as a glance round the technical department of the Stockholm City Library with its host of familiar titles makes vividly apparent.

That such a book as this, in English, should have been worth producing may seem surprising; that the Swedes should have produced one need surprise nobody. We must be grateful that it is so. There is a danger of course that the mere fact that so much information is now readily available about libraries in Sweden may result in a bias in our studies and in our examinations; even that might be no bad thing.

A. C. JONES.

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. *Books for young people, Group II: eleven to thirteen plus.* Compiled by the North Midland Branch of the Library Association under the editorship of Edgar Osborne, F.L.A. New edition, revised. 1954. 127 p. (L.A., 7s. 6d. (6s. to members)).

This list was first published in 1953 and that a second edition should be called for within a year is a deserved tribute to its compilers, and that 45 new, and good, fiction titles, nearly all published in 1953, should have been added to the list is an equally deserved tribute to the book trade. Among the regretted excisions from the previous list are Rachel Field's *Hitty* and Doris Gates' *Blue willow*, a finer book than *North Fork* which replaces it. But in other respects the fiction list is strengthened by the additions and not really weakened by the exclusions.

There are but two criticisms to be made of this otherwise excellent list; the first concerns the wide interpretation of the reading abilities and interests of children of 11 to 13 plus. Admittedly, this does range from books of the standard of Goaman's *Judy's cookery book* to Grenfell's *Nelson*, but when three lists are being published it would surely be wiser to confine entries to titles written for the average child of the ages cited and most children of 11—13 would surely find Komroff's biography of Marco Polo more suitable than Maurice Collis's, and *Our Everest adventure* (Brockhampton, 12s. 6d.) more readable than Sir John Hunt's full version of that immortal adventure.

A much more serious criticism can be levelled against the arrangement of the non-fiction entries in the list which, we are told, are in "subject order." If this list is intended for the general public, as it partly is, what can they regard as orderly about the following sequence of subjects—Myths, Citizenship, Careers, Transport, Costume, Folklore and Legends? Even the most Dewey-minded librarian must occasionally quarrel with the master, and book-lists, like book-exhibitions, can, and should, bring together related subjects such as Myths, Folklore and Legends; Transport (p. 45), Ships, Railways, Aircraft (p. 67—72). (The intervening pages are mainly filled with biology entries, not, to the lay, or indeed to any, mind, the missing link between transport and its component parts). The first three Dewey numbers are added to help the child find the book he requires on the library shelves, but this should not bind the compilers of the list to perpetuating the weaknesses of the scheme, and it is hoped that any new editions of this or other Library Association lists will be more realistic and less ritualistic in the arrangement of entries.

JOAN BUTLER.

ESDAILE ARUNDELL. *A student's manual of bibliography.* revised by Roy Stokes. 1954. 392p. (Allen & Unwin, 18s.).

The book under review is complementary to that by Norman E. Binns, published by the A.A.L., and is already well-known to students of librarianship, who will welcome this new edition, revised by Mr. Stokes.

The *Introduction to historical bibliography* does in fact fill out for the librarianship student those parts of Dr. Esdale's indispensable *Manual* in which he has purposely kept to the basic structure of the subject, giving just enough

historical background for an understanding of the processes of analytical bibliography and the tools for its exploitation.

Dr. Esdaile has geared his book to the immediate needs of the student bibliographer: in his chapter on paper he concentrates on the varying grades of book papers and on their durability; in the one on printing it is the signatures and causes of variants which are most prominent, and "the landmarks in the history of printing and publishing" range from block books to Penguins in thirty pages. Whereas, however, his descriptions of illustration processes are brief (but sufficient for the purpose), and private presses are hardly mentioned, the chapter on binding, both historical and practical, is a classical account of book leathers and the repairing of bindings. These chapters on the "science of bibliography" serve to lead up to the "art of recording books" which is dealt with at length—the identifying and the collating, and the detailed description of books. Roughly half the book is devoted to this study of analytical and of systematic bibliography (the recording of books in such a way as to be most useful to the literary researcher), and to a guide to the main primary and secondary bibliographies in each field of knowledge.

Subjects in the *Introduction* not covered in the *Manual* are the history of publishing and bookselling down to 1850; for this the reader is referred to Mumby's *Publishing and bookselling*, a new edition of which in 1954 brings the subject right up to date. A chapter is also devoted to copyright in books. A useful chapter on the development of book trade bibliography is the nearest approach to Dr. Esdaile's survey of primary bibliographies.

ANNE PETRIDES.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### NATIONAL COUNCILLORS

The A.G.M. of the A.A.L. on May 4th resolved that of the (now) nine nationally elected members of the Council, three should be under thirty. This is designed to assure the Voice of Youth a hearing. May I enquire just how the voice of youth is to reach these three orifices? Is there to be an organisation created to correlate the young members of A.A.L. throughout the country and synthesise their views for the benefit of our three proletarians? Each election places these unknown and untried representatives on the Council for one year. At the end of that year they may be seeing the light as through a glass darkly, and be aware of what the Council is doing. For what purpose? Their re-election is problematical in the extreme. Meanwhile they are time consuming passengers.

The stimulus for this mock heroic resolution would appear to be that men of years and wisdom are at present

elected by overwhelming majorities of votes—those pitifully few votes returned by our now so interested youth—and that newcomers have little chance. This is said to leave power in the hands of a clique. What percentage of our membership was present at Chaucer House to force this remarkable resolution on the Council? Were there more than forms a clique? Were they representative of our Association? Would not you, one of the vast majority unable to attend this jamboree, like to know more about it, and to cast your vote? Are you convinced that your Divisional Committee is ignoring you—that is if you ever write to them, attend a meeting, or stand for election? What about a plebiscite? It would probably lead to the same result, and in any case I am all for younger members having their say, but let it be not through this farcical contrivance.

L. E. TAYLOR,

Deputy Borough Librarian, Bilston P.L.

## A.A.L. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Students are reminded that completed application forms, together with the appropriate fees, for the courses beginning in October and November, must reach Mr. J. S. Davey, F.L.A., 49, Halstead Gardens, London, N.21, on or before 30th September, 1955, after which date no application will be considered. Earlier receipt is advisable and would be greatly appreciated.

Full particulars of the courses offered are given in the current *Students' Handbook*.

*Revision Courses.* A limited number of *Registration* and *Final* courses are available to run from September to

December. These short period courses are reserved exclusively for those students who have already sat the examination in the subjects required.

Completed application forms for *Registration* revision courses, together with the appropriate fees, must reach Mr. Davey by 31st August. Application forms for *Final* revision courses will be accepted up to one week after publication of the summer examination results if this is later than 31st August.

*Fees.* The fee per course is £2 7s. 6d., plus 10s. extra to students in Africa, America, Asia and Australasia.

### CHANGE OF HON. EDUCATION SECRETARY

As from June 1st, 1955, Mr. J. S. Davey, F.L.A., has been appointed as Hon. Education Secretary of the A.A.L. All enquiries regarding correspondence courses should now be addressed to him at 49, Halstead Gardens, London, N.21.

## ROUND THE DIVISIONS — 14

### YORKSHIRE

THE TITLE of the Division is a misnomer, for the Division's area comprises only two of the three Ridings of the "County of the broad acres." The North Riding forms part of the North-Eastern Division, but there is enough left to provide an active (and argumentative) body of librarians.

The East and the West Ridings differ very much in their scenery, industries, ways of living and in their libraries. The industrial West contains three great cities (Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford), and many other large ones as well as half a hundred towns with civic pride and a grim clutch on their independence. In some areas these towns run into one another and provide contrasts in library provision between large city, small town and county branch. The agricultural East

contains only one large city, but it is Yorkshire's chief port. Apart from Hull there are only a handful of small towns in the Riding, and so the Division's area is hopelessly lopsided; any attempt to alternate meetings between the two Ridings (and the Divisional Committee has consistently attempted this theoretical balance) has meant a far higher attendance in the highly-populated western sector.

The Yorkshire Branch of the Library Assistants' Association was formed at Leeds on December 13th, 1906, and so the Division can claim to be among the seniors. The archives show that from the very inception Yorkshire lived up to its reputation for fearless criticism, high scholarship and taking itself seriously. The subject of the very first paper given in the Division was "The

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## Preservation of Ancient Classical Literature."

The records of the Division's activities are a fascinating series of documents; they show not only how keen were the members and how heated the discussion, but, by the impressive collection of cuttings from various newspapers, how they must have affected public opinion over the fifty years. The names of speakers are familiar to us now as we turn over the yellowing pages: from the first paper, which was given by 'Mr. James Ross, of the York Public Library,' the Division has shown an ability to scent future greatness and to demand its service.

Education has always been one of the great themes of the Divisional Committee's activities, and before the First World War we find plans being made for running classes for assistants. Since the Second War and despite financial stringency there has been an unbroken series of Week-end Schools, organised at first at Tong Hall, Sheffield, and for the last four years at

Grantley Hall, near Ripon. These schools have brought members together in restful surroundings for far from restful sessions of discussion and erudition which have attracted some of the best speakers in the country. Another regular feature of post-war years has been the pre-examination quiz, where tutors stand to be fired at and students pick up the last minute wrinkle which (they always hope) will just tip the scales.

In fifty years the meetings, held usually five times per year, have scoured the county for subjects of interest. Parties have visited factories, ports, binderies, churches—and sometimes libraries—and the county's literary shrines have received regular pilgrimages.

The membership at the moment is 400. Shortage of money has handicapped the Division in many of its ideas, but with such a noble history, with Yorkshire grit and with a belief in the uses of the A.A.L., the future is . . . the future.

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